

Dickie House



6 Fairview Street Hawthorn

Location

6 Fairview Street HAWTHORN, BOROONDARA CITY

Municipality

BOROONDARA CITY

Level of significance

Incl in HO area indiv sig

Heritage Listing

Boroondara City

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - November 8, 2021

What is Significant?

The Dickie House and its grounds at 6 Fairview Street, Hawthorn are significant. The house, built c. 1961-64, possesses highly articulated Japanese-inspired detailing; and landscaped garden designed and planted by acclaimed Australian landscape architect Mervyn Davis MBE with stone and rockwork by noted landscape designer Ellis Stones.

How is it significant?

The Dickie House is of local historical, architectural and aesthetic significance to the City of Boroondara.

Why is it significant?

The Dickie House (1961-63) is of historical significance as it is representative of an established pattern of architect designed houses that responded to difficult sites, establishing the City of Boroondara as one of the foremost testing grounds for experimental architecture in Australia. (Criterion A)

The garden is an uncommon example of a residential garden design by landscape architect Mervyn Davis with landscape designer Ellis Stones, both acclaimed Australian landscape designers who played prominent roles in establishing landscape architecture as a profession in Australia. The elaborate design was drawn by Mervyn Davis and features extensive areas of stonework and a stone feature in the lawn, presumably overseen by Ellis Stones. The planting scheme is a rare example by Mervyn Davis undertaken during her limited period of private practice between 1961 and 1963. (Criterion A)

The Dickie House is representative of the post-war design ethos, optimism and architectural modernisation pioneered by Robin Boyd and others. The design features honesty of structure and material, clean lines, deep eaves and an overall sense of innovation in design characteristic of this period. The integration of the house with the landscape, with its 'floating' appearance over the banks of the Yarra is characteristic of Modernist design. (Criterion D)

6 Fairview Street is aesthetically significant for its accomplished modernist garden design by noted landscape architect Mervyn Davis with highly acclaimed landscape designer Ellis Stones. The plan was drawn by Mervyn Davis in 1961-62, and was designed in response to the modernist house and the surrounding landscape. The plan shows a design influenced by Japanese gardens, modernism, and Australian landscape themes. It was designed to step down the slope, allow views over the garden to the Yarra River, and included access in the north boundary to the adjacent Fairview Park. The original garden included a level area of lawn punctuated by a carefully grouped cluster of large stones (bluestone boulders) to form a sculptural feature, large areas of natural appearing stone laid on areas of sloped land, paths and garden beds defined by charcoal grey concrete paving creating both angular and biomorphic forms, areas of sandstone paving, a functional space along the south side of the garden. The original design also incorporated a Japanese stone lantern and rockery which are still extant. The more steeply contoured parts of the garden were landscaped with retaining walls and stepped pathways of bluestone pitchers. Although some mature eucalypts were retained as part of the design, framing views to and from the house, the original planting scheme otherwise comprised predominantly non-Australian plants, including roses, rhododendron and azaleas, citrus trees, a gingko tree, and elm. (Criterion E)

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|---------------------------|---|
| Heritage Study/Consultant | Boroondara - Municipal-Wide Heritage Gap Study Volume 3: Hawthorn, Context, 2018; |
| Construction dates | 1961, 1961, 1961, |
| Hermes Number | 208285 |
| Property Number | |

Physical Description 1

The subject property is located within that part of Fairview Street bordered by Fairview Park to the north and the Yarra River to the west; 8 Fairview Street neighbours the subject property to the south.

The Dickie House is a single-storey house with a lower-ground floor level. It is constructed from unpainted expressed pink cement bricks and unpainted grey cement panels with a flat roof and deep eaves supported on projecting timber rafters. Given the sloped nature of the site, the lower-ground floor level of the house, which incorporates dual garages, is located below street level. The ground floor entry and verandah are accessed via an elevated walkway at street level. At the rear, an L-shaped verandah extends along most of the west elevation with a return to part of the north elevation; the verandah is contained beneath the continuous roof form of the residence.

The house retains significant period features which adhere to its design in the late-twentieth century, many of which appear Japanese-inspired in their detail, including: expressed beams that extend to the underside of the projecting eaves, louvred spandrel panels, a concrete relief panelled facade wall and decorative rectilinear-pattern inspired metalwork security door and window grilles. Alterations to the house appear minimal, consisting of the replacement of the original timber balustrade on the rear verandah with a modern clear glass alternative.

From the garden plan (1961-62) and accompany notes by Davis, the garden appears to have been designed in response to the modernist house and the surrounding landscape, and influenced by Japanese gardens, modernism, and Australian landscape themes. It was designed to step down the slope, allow views over the garden to the Yarra River, and included access through the north boundary fence via a Japanese inspired gateway to the adjacent Fairview Park. The original garden included a level area of lawn punctuated by a carefully grouped cluster of large stones (bluestone boulders) to form a sculptural feature, large areas of natural appearing stone laid on areas of sloped land, paths and garden beds defined by charcoal grey concrete paths and garden bed edging creating both angular and biomorphic forms, areas of sandstone paving, a functional space along the south side of the garden. The original design also incorporated a Japanese stone lantern and rockery. The more steeply contoured parts of the garden were landscaped with retaining walls and stepped pathways of bluestone pitchers. The original planting scheme was for predominantly non-Australian plants, including roses, rhododendron and azaleas, citrus trees, a gingko tree, and elm. Rock pockets were to be filled with a single type of bulb or groundcover. Two mature eucalypts (shown as large trees in the original drawings and 1964 photographs), were retained on both sides of the garden at the edge of the lawn before the land dropped more steeply to the river. These two eucalypts remain, their trunks and white barked branches and canopies framing views towards the house from the river and presumably views from the property to the river.

Within the grounds of the house, significant landscaping features remain including bluestone retaining walls, concrete pathways and tea-tree boundary fences. A series of mature plantings, apparent in both the front and rear setbacks, no doubt date from the design of the garden by landscape architect Mervyn Davis in 1961, with stonework designed and placed by landscape designer Ellis Stones, in 1961-63. The Japanese rockery and lantern, evident in photographs from Davis, still remain visible toward the rear of the residence.

This place/object may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to the Heritage Act 2017. Check the Victorian Heritage Database, selecting 'Heritage Victoria' as the place source.

For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>